

CLAIMS

1. A method enabling the copying of documents, the method including the steps of:
- 5 scanning a document which may contain both document information and coded data indicative of an identity of the document, and forming a digital image of the document;
- detecting, if the document contains said coded data indicative of the identity of the document, the coded data;
- 10 if the document contains said coded data indicative of the identity of the document, accessing stored data representing the content of the document; and
- printing a copy of the document and, at the same time, printing on the copy coded data indicative of an identity of the copy.
- 15 2. A method enabling the copying of documents, the method including the steps of:
- scanning a document which may contain both document information and coded data indicative of an identity of the document, and forming a digital image of the document;
- 20 detecting, if the document contains said coded data indicative of the identity of the document, the coded data;
- if the document contains said coded data indicative of the identity of the document, accessing stored data representing the content of the document; and
- storing data representing a copy of the document, the stored data including a
- 25 unique identifier for said copy.
3. A method according to claim 1 or claim 2, the copy of the document including information derived from said scanned digital image of the document.

4. A method according to claim 1 or claim 2, the copy of the document including information derived from said stored data representing the content of the document.
- 5 5. A method according to claim 1 or claim 2, the copy of the document including information derived from both said scanned digital image of the document and said stored data representing the content of the document.
6. A method according to claim 1, wherein said coded data indicative of an identity of the copy is indicative of a plurality of reference points on said copy, the coded data being printed to be readable by a sensing device operated by a user in order to identify the position of the sensing device relative to the copy.
- 10 7. A method according to claim 1, including the step of storing data representing said copy of the document, to enable reproduction of said copy with both document information and coded data.
- 15 8. A method according to claim 2 or claim 7, the data storing step involving archiving said data and allocating a unique identifier for each said copy.
- 20 9. A method according to claim 8, the archiving of said data and the allocating of said unique copy identifier being realised by respective computer servers.
10. A method according to claim 2 or claim 7, the data storing step being carried out in a location remote from the scanning or the printing steps.
- 25 11. A method according to claim 2 or claim 7, including the step of carrying out optical character recognition (OCR) on at least part of the content of the scanned

document, and associating the result of said OCR with said stored data representing said copy of the document, to enable searching of the content of said copy.

12. A method according to claim 1 or claim 2, wherein said coded data is
5 substantially invisible to the eye.

13. A method according to claim 1 or claim 2, wherein said coded data is visible to the eye, and embedded within visible document information.

10 14. A method according to claim 1 or claim 2, wherein, if the document contains coded data indicative of the identity of the document and said stored data representing the content of the document is accessed, said stored data and said digital image can be compared to determine if the document contains additional or omitted document information, when compared with said stored data.

15. 15. A method according to claim 14, wherein an operator may choose whether said copy of the document includes said additional or omitted document information.

16. A method according to claim 1, including an authorisation step before said
20 printing step can be carried out.

17. A method according to claim 1, wherein the copy is a multipage document, including the step of binding together the printed pages.

25 18. A system enabling the copying of documents, including:

a scanner for scanning a document which may contain both document information and coded data indicative of an identity of the document and enabling formation of a digital image of the document;

a detector for detecting, if the document contains said coded data indicative of the identity of the document, the coded data;

a data store representing document content, accessible if the document contains said coded data indicative of the identity of the document; and

- 5 a printer adapted for printing a copy of the document and, at the same time, printing on the copy coded data indicative of an identity of the copy.

19. A system enabling the copying of documents, including:

- 10 a scanner for scanning a document which may contain both document information and coded data indicative of an identity of the document and enabling formation of a digital image of the document;

a detector for detecting, if the document contains said coded data indicative of the identity of the document, the coded data;

- 15 a first data store representing document content, accessible if the document contains said coded data indicative of the identity of the document; and

a second data store for storing data representing a copy of the document, together with a unique identifier for the copy.

20. A system according to claim 19, including a server for allocating a unique identifier to each said copy.

21. A system according to claim 19 connectable with a printer adapted for printing a copy of the document and, at the same time, printing on the copy coded data indicative of an identity of the copy.

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22. A system according to claim 18 or claim 21, including a sensing device operable by a user to identify said coded data printed on said copy.

23. A system according to claim 22, the sensing device including a marking nib.

24. A system according to claim 22, the sensing device including an identification means which imparts a unique identity to the sensing device, the system able to associate
5 the identifier for the copy with the identity of the sensing device.

25. A system according to claim 18 or claim 21, the printer including a binder for binding the pages of a multi-page copy.

10 26. A system according to claim 18 or claim 21, the scanner and the printer being provided as parts of a single apparatus.

27. A system according to claim 18 or claim 19, the scanner and the detector being provided as parts of a single apparatus.

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28. A system according to claim 27, the scanner comprising a moving linear image sensor device, the detector carried by this device.

29. A system according to claim 22, the sensing device adapted to communicate
20 with a base station, the scanner and the base station provided as parts of a single apparatus.

30. A system according to claim 18 or claim 19, including authorisation means to prevent use by an unauthorised user .

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